

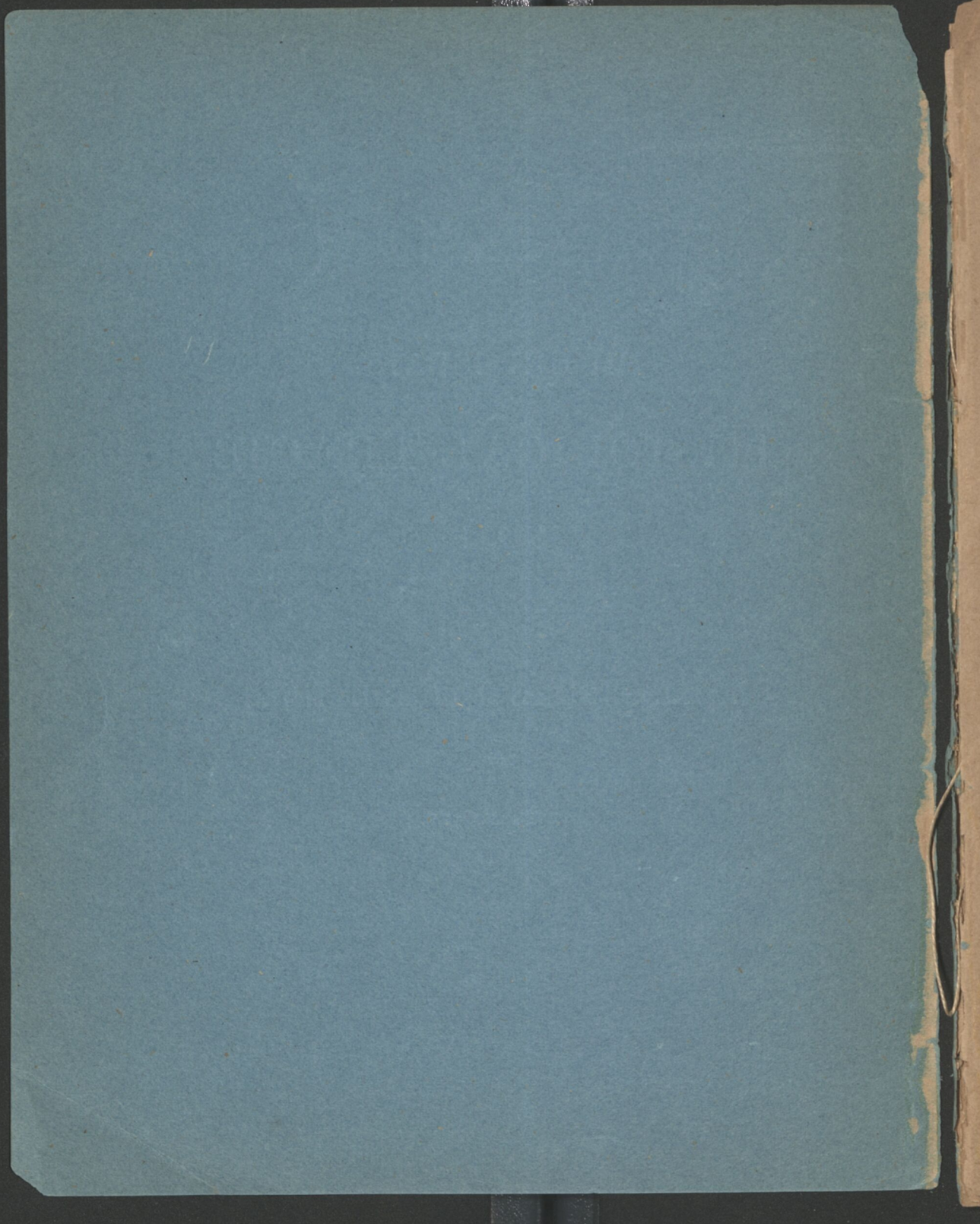
RHODE ISLAND
HISTORICAL TRACTS

NO. 16.

LOOKING GLASS FOR THE TIMES

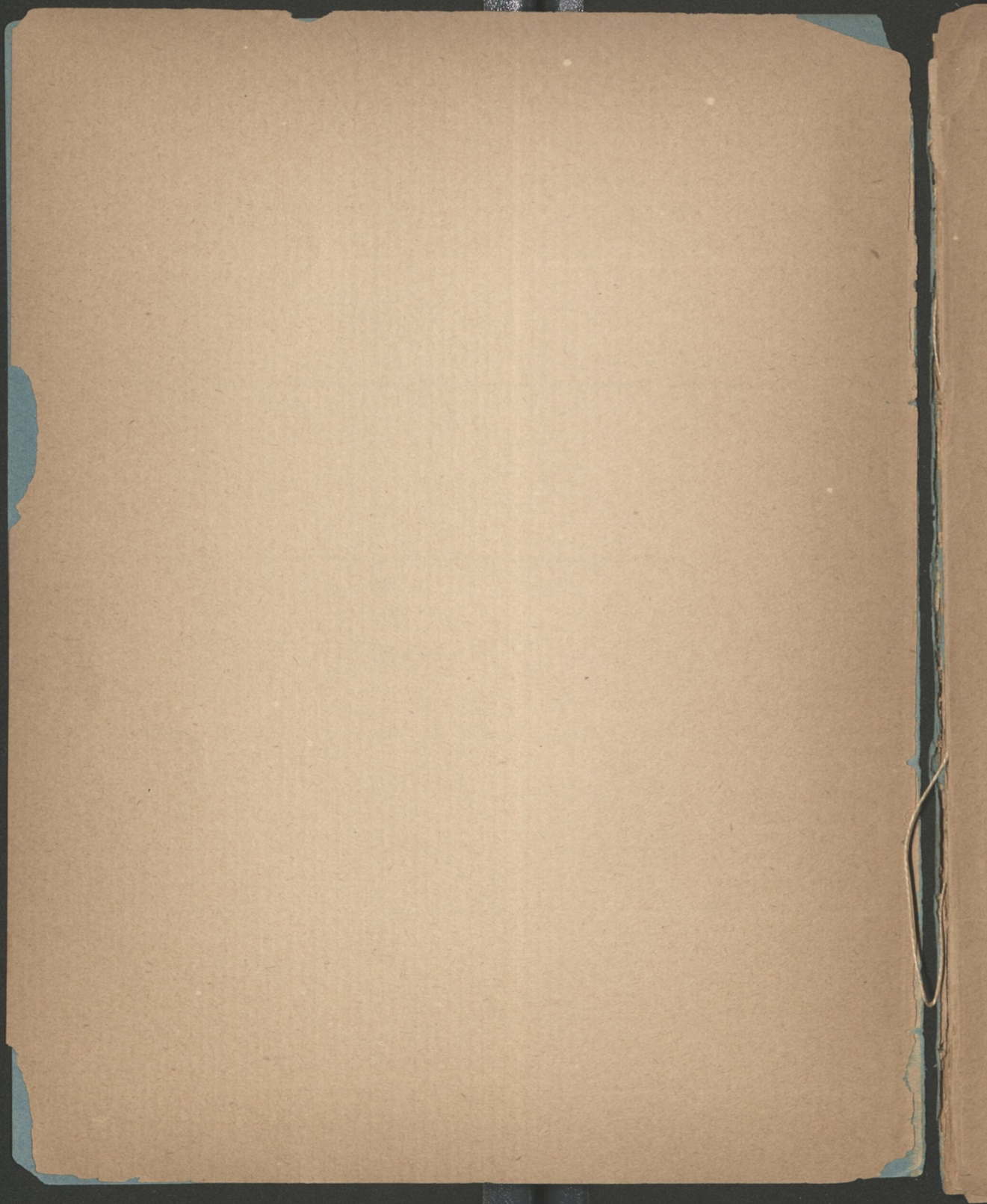
BY

PETER FOLGER.



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SCARCE



RHODE ISLAND
HISTORICAL TRACTS.

NO. 16.



PROVIDENCE
SIDNEY S. RIDER.
1883.

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SIDNEY S. RIDER
1878.

PROVIDENCE PRESS COMPANY, PRINTERS.

A

LOOKING GLASS FOR THE TIMES

OR THE

FORMER SPIRIT OF NEW ENGLAND REVIVED
IN THIS GENERATION.

BY

PETER FOLGER.



PROVIDENCE
SIDNEY S. RIDER
1883.



PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

It is necessary that the publisher of this series of Tracts should explain why this Tract is included in the series. It was written in Massachusetts previously to 1675, by a resident, and is a very earnest and powerful argument against that policy carried out by the Government and Clergy of the Province, by which numbers of excellent men and women were imprisoned, whipped, banished, or suffered martyrdom, on account of their religious belief. Mary Dyer, the wife of the Rhode Island Secretary, was just as much a martyr as was John Huss. A recent writer on Roger Williams's banishment, maintains that Williams was banished because he was politically dangerous to the state. Was Mary Dyer hanged in Massachusetts because she, too, was politically dangerous to the state? Another and still later writer maintains that Rhode Island was settled by a parcel of religious fanatics. Pray what epithet will he apply to those who remained in Massachusetts to hang or put in irons the poor fanatics who would not surrender their opinions nor their lands? Here in Rhode Island they reasoned with men to convince them of their religious errors, and, failing to convince, let them alone. In Massachusetts, failing to convince, they brought an end to the argument by hanging the "fanatic."

Mr. Folger, who lived at the time, was of mature years, possessed of a clear intelligence and of a powerful mind, makes no mention of these poor *fanatics* being "politically dangerous to the state," but he expressly says :

" The cause of this their suffering
Was not for any sin."

Will the persistent misrepresentations of the writers of Massachusetts history never come to an end? What force is there in the argument that Roger Williams was politically dangerous to the state when everybody can see that within a stone's throw of Massachusetts he founded another state, which grew and prospered certainly as much as the one from which he was driven, and from which came forth those principles of religious liberty which to-day govern not only Massachusetts, but every other portion of the civilized world. Writers of what they wish called history would do well to cease misrepresenting these facts. It is because Mr. Folger makes special reference to these poor "fanatics" who settled in Rhode Island, and suffered afterwards in Massachusetts, and because of his manly protest against all such treatment, his fearless statement of the truth as he saw it, that the publisher has been induced to reprint his verses. To-day the world at large outside of the commonwealth is with Mr. Folger, and when he tells the Massachusetts magistrate,

" Indeed I really believe
its not your buisness
To meddle with the church of Christ
in matters more or less,"

the world is with him; and men wonder that these relics of a barbaric age find defenders in this nineteenth century.

The fourth specification of the charges against Williams, as given by Winthrop, and upon which every writer must rely, is as follows: "That the civil magistrate's power extends only to the bodies and goods and outward state of man." According to these modern investigators, this fourth specification had no reference to the rights of conscience. They hold that it clearly showed Mr. Williams to be in opposition to "a due subordination to the powers that be in the state, made him a subverter of the very foundations of their government." *

Mr. Williams believed the power of the civil magistrate extended to the body and goods of the citizens of the state and not farther: this was subverting the very foundations of the government.

The author of a recently published and apparently exhaustive examination of the case of Roger Williams, reaches the conclusion, first that Williams was not banished at all -- "exclusion" is the euphemistic phrase he uses; and second, that his views concerning liberty of conscience had little or nothing to do with the "exclusion," but that Williams was "excluded" for "reasons purely political," and having no relations to any other subjects "than those bearing on the common rights of property." A still more recent writer, in his "short history of the English Colonies," gives us music from the same lyre, indeed it almost seems that he must have read the former treatise, for he also disbelieves in the "banishment" of Mr. Williams; "driven out" is the phrase which he uses, "not because he believed in liberty of conscience, but because his acts were politically dangerous."

* "As to Roger Williams," page 9.

Williams held that the King of England possessed no title to the land in New England, that it belonged to the original possessor, the Indian, and that any valid title to it must be obtained by paying the Indian for it. This he claimed the Massachusetts settlers had not done, and therefore their titles were invalid.

The doctrine that a person holding to the opinion that the owner and possessor of property is entitled to be paid for it, is a "person politically dangerous to the state," seems altogether novel. Such a defence set up by some delinquent debtor before the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, would be an occasion of some interest in these days to such poor "fanatics" as are now living in these Plantations.

Having given his reasons for reproducing, as a Rhode Island Historical Tract, Mr. Folger's verses, the publisher has compiled from various sources some account of Mr. Folger, "the strong-brained and free-hearted old surveyor of Nantucket." Mr. Duyckinck says "he was an Englishman, that he came to America with his father from Norwich in 1635, that he was then eighteen years of age. The family settled at Martha's Vineyard. In 1663 Peter Folger removed to Nantucket among the first settlers. He was one of five commissioners to lay out the land, being well qualified by his knowledge of surveying for such a task. The words of the order prove the estimation in which he was held in the community, 'whatsoever shall be done by them, or any three of them, Peter Folger being one, shall be accounted legal and valid.' He was learned in the Indian languages and was of much service as an interpreter."

He died in 1690, leaving a wife and several children. His youngest daughter, Abiah, became the mother of Benjamin Frank-

lin, who, in his autobiography makes honorable mention of his mother, and his grandfather, and especially of these verses, thus: "I was born at Boston in New England. My mother, the second wife, was Abiah Folger, daughter of Peter Folger, one of the first colonists of New England, of whom Cotton Mather makes honorable mention in his ecclesiastical history of that province as a pious and learned Englishman, if I rightly recollect his expressions. I have been told of his having written a variety of little pieces, but there appears to be only one in print, which I met with many years ago. It was published in the year 1675, and is in familiar verse agreeably to the tales of the times and country. The author addresses himself to the governors for the time being, speaks for liberty of conscience, and in favour of the anabaptists, quakers, and other sectaries who had suffered persecution. To this persecution he attributes the wars with the natives and other calamities which afflicted the country, regarding them as judgments of God in punishment of so odious an offence, and he exhorts the government to the repeal of laws so contrary to charity. The poem appeared to be written with a manly freedom and a pleasing simplicity."

From the statement made by Franklin that these verses were published in 1675, the opinion has hitherto been held that there was such an edition. It has now come to be doubted. In fact in one edition of the autobiography the words, "published in 1675," were altered to "written in 1675." No copy is now known previous to that of 1763, from which this edition is reprinted.

In the forthcoming volume of the catalogue of the library of the late John Carter Brown, Mr. John R. Bartlett has surveyed

the whole ground. From his note the publisher has been permitted to make such extracts as he desired. Mr. Bartlett says: "Notwithstanding these assertions that the Looking Glass for the Times, was printed in 1675, no copy of such edition is known to exist, nor is it found in any catalogue; the inference is that the writers who mention a printed edition of 1675, are in error. That they saw a manuscript copy of it and that the first and only printed edition of it is that of 1763. Sabin in his dictionary gives both editions, but says he never saw the former. Mr. Duyckinck reprinted the verses, but he took them from a manuscript copy."

If, as it now seems to be shown by Mr. Bartlett, the verses were not printed until 1763, nearly three quarters of a century after Mr. Folger's death, some of the commendations bestowed on him by Prof. Tyler, because "he nobly declined shirking all responsibility in the affair, but just wove his name and his place of abode into the tissue of his verse," disappear. It cannot be held that a man particularly braves public sentiment whose utterances are kept out of sight, in manuscript, three quarters of a century after his death. With another opinion by this same writer there can be no difference, that "this ballad, though without one sparkle of poetry, is great in frankness and in force."

A
Looking GLASS
FOR THE
T I M E S.
O R,

The former Spirit of *New-England*
revived in this generation.

To which is added,

The Reports from the Lords of the Com-
mittee of Councils, and the KING's
Order relating to the People called
Quakers in *New-England*.

By *Peter Folger*.

*Let all that read these Verses know,
That I intend something to show
About our War, how it hath been,
And also what is the chief Sin,
That God doth so with us contend,
And when these Wars are like to end.
Read then in Love; do not despise
What here is set before thine eyes.*

Printed in the Year 1763.



A

Looking GLASS, &c.

N*EW-England* for these many Years
hath had both Rest and Peace,
But now the Case is otherwise ;
our Trouble doth encrease.
The plague of War is now begun
in some great Colonies,
And many Towns as desolate
we may see with our Eyes.
The Loss of many goodly Men
we may lament also,
Who in the War have lost their lives,
and fallen by our Foe.
Our Women also they have took,
and Children very small ;
Great Cruelty they have used
to some, tho' not to all.

The Enemy that hath done this,
are very foolish Men ;
Yet God doth make of them a Rod
to punish us for Sin.
If we then truly turn to God,
he will remove his Ire,
And will forthwith take this his Rod
And cast it into Fire.
Let us then search what is the Sin
that God doth punish for ;
And when found out cast it away,
and ever it abhor.
Sure 'tis not chiefly for those Sins
that Magistrates do name,
And make good Laws for to suppress,
and execute the same.
But 'tis for that same crying Sin,
that Rulers will not own,
And that whereby much Cruelty
to brethren hath been shown :
The Sin of Persecution
such Laws established ;

By which Laws they have gone so far,
as Blood hath touched Blood.

It is now Forty Years ago,
since some of those were made,
Which was the Ground and Rise of all
the persecuting Trade.

Then many worthy persons were
banished to the Woods,
Where they among the Natives did
lose their most precious Bloods.

And since that, many Godley Men
have been to Prison sent ;

They have been fin'd and whip'd also,
and suffer'd Banishment.

The Cause of this their Suffering
was not for any Sin,

But for the Witness that they bare
against Babes Sprinkling.

Of later time their hath been some
Men come into this Land,

To warn the Rulers of their Sins,
as I do understand.

They call'd on all, both great and small,
 to fear God and repent ;
 And for their Testimonies thus
 they suffer'd Punishment.
 Yea, some of them they did affirm,
 that they were sent of God
 To testify to great and small,
 that God would send his Rod
 Against those Colonies, because
 they did make Laws not good ;
 And if those Laws were not repeal'd,
 the end would be in Blood.
 And tho' that these were harmless Men,
 and did no hurt to any,
 But lived well like honest Men,
 as testify'd by many ;
 Yet did these Laws entrap them so,
 that they were put to Death,
 And could not have the Liberty
 to speak near their last Breath.
 But these Men were as I have heard,
 against our *College Men* ;

And this was out of doubt to me,
 that which was most their sin.
 They did reprove all *Hirelings*,
 with a most Sharp Reproof,
 Because they knew not how to preach,
 till sure of Means enough.
 Now to the Sufferings of these Men,
 I have but gave a hint ;
 Because that in *George Bishop's* Book
 you may see all in print.
 But may we know the Counsellors
 that brought our Ruler sin,
 To be so guilty as they are,
 of the aforefaid Sin ?
 They were the tribe of Ministers,
 as they are said to be,
 Who always to our Magistrates
 must be the eyes to see,
 These are the Men that by their Wits,
 have spun so fair a Thread,
 That now themselves and others are
 of Natives in a Dread.

What need is there of such a Fear
 if we have done no Ill?
 But 'tis because that we have been
 not doing of God's Will.
 When *Cain* had slain his Brother, then
 began this Fear to be,
 That every Man would do to him
 the same that did him see.
 The Scripture doth declare the Cause
 why *Cain* did kill his Brother;
 It was because the Deeds of one
 was good, and not the other.
 Because that God did Favour show
 To *Abel* more than he,
 That was in verity the thing
 that Envy could not see.
 Then let us all, both great and small
 take heed how we do fight
 Against the Spirit of the Lord,
 which is our highest Light.
 Let Magistrates and Ministers
 consider what they do;

Let them repeal those evil Laws,
 and break those Bands in two,
 Which have been made as Traps and Snares
 to catch the Innocents,
 And whereby it has gone so far,
 to Acts of Violence.

I see you write yourselves in Print,
the Balm of Gilead;

Then do not act as if you were
 like Men that are half mad.
 If you can heal the Land, what is
 the Cause things are so bad?

I think instead of that, you make
 the Hearts of People sad.

Is this a Time for you to press,
 to draw the Blood of those
 That are your Neighbours and your Friends
 as if you had no Foes.

Yea some there are, as I have heard,
 have lately found out Tricks
 To put the Cause of all the War
 upon the *Hereticks*,

Or rather on some Officers
 that now begin to slack
 The execution of those Laws,
 whose consequence is black.
 I do affirm to you, if that
 be really your mind,
 You must go turn another Leaf,
 before that Peace you find.
 Now loving Friends and Country-Men,
 I wish we may be wise;
 Tis now a time for every Man
 to see with his own Eyes.
 'Tis easy to provoke the Lord
 to send among us War;
 'Tis easy to do Violence,
 to envy and to jar;
 To shew a Spirit that is high,
 to scorn and domineer;
 To pride it out as if there were,
 no God to make us fear;
 To covet what is not our own,
 to cheat and to oppress;

To live a Life that might free us
from Acts of Righteousness ;
To swear and lie, and to be drunk,
to backbite one another ;
To carry Tales that may do hurt
and Mischief to our Brother !
To live in such Hypocrisy,
as Men may think us good,
Although our Hearts within are full
of Evil, and of Blood.
All these and many Evils more
are easy for to do ;
But to repent, and to reform,
we have no Strength unto.
Let us then seek for help from God,
and turn to him that smite ;
Let us take heed, that at no time,
we sin against our Light.
Let's bear our testimony plain
'gainst Sin in High and Low ;
And see that we no Cowards be,
to hide the Light we know.

When *Jonathan* is call'd to Court,
 shall we as Stander's by,
 Be still and have no Word to speak,
 but suffer him to die?
 If that you say you cannot help,
 things will be as they are;
 I tell you true, 'tis plain and clear,
 those Words may come from fear.
 That you shall lose some carnal things,
 if you do speak for God;
 And here you go the nearest way
 to taste deep of his Rod.
 'Tis true, there are some times indeed
 of Silence to the Meek;
 Not ever, for the Lord doth say,
 there is a time to speak.
 Be vigilant then for to see
 the movings of your heart,
 And you will know right well the time
 when you shall act your Part.
 I would not have you for to think,
 tho' I have wrote so much,

That I hereby do throw a Stone
 at Magistrates *as such*.
 The Rulers in the Country I
 do own them in the Lord ;
 And such as are for Government,
 with them I do accord.
 But that which I intend hereby,
 is that they would keep bound,
 And meddle not with God's Worship,
 for which they have no ground.
 And I am not alone herein,
 there's many hundreds more
 That have for many Year's ago
 spake much upon that Score,
 Indeed I really believe
 it's not your Business
 To meddle with the Church of Christ,
 in Matters more or less,
 There's work enough to do besides,
 to judge in *mine* and *thine*,
 To succour Poor and Fatherless,
 that is the Work in fine.

And I do think that now you find
enough of that to do ;
Much more at such a Time as this
as there is War also,
Indeed I count it very low
for People in these Days,
To ask the Rulers for their leave
to serve God in his Ways.
I count it worse in Magistrates
to use the Iron Sword,
To do that Work which Christ alone
will do by his own Word.
The Church may now go stay at home,
there's nothing for to do ;
Their Work is all cut out by Law,
and almost made up too.
Now Reader, least you should mistake,
in what I said before
Concerning Minister's, I think
to write a few Words more,
I would not have you for to think
that I am such a Fool,

To write against Learning, as such,
 or to cry down a School.
 But 'tis that *Popish College* way,
 that I intend hereby,
 Where Men are mew'd up in a Cage,
 fit for all Villany.
 But I shall leave this puddle Stuff
 to neighbours at the Door,
 That can speak more unto such things,
 upon a knowing Score.
 And now these Men though ne'er so bad,
 when they have learn'd their Trade,
 They must come in and bear a Part,
 whatever Laws are made.
 I can't but wonder for to see
 our Magistrates and Wife,
 That they sit still, and suffer them,
 to ride on them, not rise,
 And stir them up to do that Work
 that Scripture Rule there wants,
 To persecute and persecute
 Those that they judge are Saints.

There's one thing more that I believe
is worfe than all the reſt,
They vilify the Spirit of God,
and count School Learning Beſt.
If that a Boy hath learn'd his Trade,
and can the Spirit diſgrace,
Then he is lifted up on high, .
and needs muſt have a Place,
But I ſhall leave this dirty Stuff,
and give but here a hint,
Be cauſe that you have *Cradock's* Book,
and may ſee more in Print.
There are ſome few, it may be, that
are clear of this ſame Trade;
And of thoſe Men, I only ſay,
theſe Verſes are not made.
Now for the length of time, how long
theſe Wars are like to be,
I may ſpeak ſomething unto that,
if Men will reaſon ſee.
The Scripture doth point out the time,
and 'tis as we do chuſe,

For to obey the Voice of God,
or else for to refuse.
The Prophet *Jeremy* doth say,
when War is threatened fore,
That if Men do repent and turn,
God will afflict no more.
But such a turning unto God,
as is but Verbally,
When Men refuse for to reform,
it is not worth a fly.
'Tis hard for you, as I do hear,
though you be under Rod,
To say to *Israel Go, you,*
and serve the Lord your God.
Though you do many Prayers make,
and add Fasting thereto,
Yet if your Hands be full of Blood,
all this will never do.
The end that God doth send his Sword,
is that we might amend;
Then if that we reform aright,
the War will shortly end.

New-England they are like the *Jews*,
 as like, as like can be;
 They made large Promises to God,
 at home and at the Sea:
 They did proclaim free Liberty,
 they cut the Calf in twain,
 They past between the Part thereof:
 O this was all in vain!
 For since they came into this Land,
 they floated to and fro,
 Sometimes their Brethren may be free,
 while hence to Prison go.
 According as the times to go,
 and Weather is abroad,
 So we can serve our selves sometimes,
 and sometimes serve the Lord.
 But let us hear what God doth say
 to such backsliding Men,
 That can with Ease so break their Vows,
 and soon go back again. *Jer. 34.*
 He saith he will proclaim for them,
 a Freedom to the Sword,

Because they would not fear him so
as to obey his Word.

This Liberty unto the Sword,
he hath proclaim'd for us,
And we are like to feel it long,
if Matters do go thus.

'Tis better for our Magistrates,
to shorten time, I say,
By breaking of those Bands in two,
that look an evil way.

You do profess your selves to be
Men that do pray always,
They do not keep such evil Laws,
as may serve at wet Days.

If that the Peace of God did rule
with Power in our Heart,
Then outward War would flee away,
and Rest would be our Part.

If we could love our Brethren,
and do to them, I say,
As we would they should do to us,
we should be quite straightway.

But if that we a smiting go
of Fellow-Servants so
No marvel if our Wars encrease,
and things so heavy go.
'Tis like that some may think and say,
our War would not remain,
If so be that a thousand more
of Natives were but slain.
Alas! these are but foolish thoughts,
God can make more arise,
And if that there were none at all,
he can make War with Flys.
It is the Presence of the Lord
must make our Foes to shake,
Or else it's like he will e'er long
know how to make us quake.
Let us lie low before the Lord,
in all Humility,
And then we shall with *A/a* see
our Enemies to fly.
But if that we do leave the Lord,
and trust in Fleshly Arm,

Then 'tis no wonder if that we
do here more News of Harm.
Let's have our Faith and Hope in God,
and trust in him alone,
And then no doubt this Storm of War
it quickly will be gone.
Thus Reader, I in Love to all,
leave these few Lines with thee,
Hoping that in the Substance we
shall very well agree.
If that you do mislike the Verse,
for its uncomely Drefs,
I tell thee true, I never thought
that it would pass the Press,
If any at the Matter kick,
it's like he's gall'd at Heart,
And that's the Reason why he kicks,
because he finds it smart.
I am for Peace, and not for War,
and that's the Reason why
I write more plain than some Men do,
that use to daub and lie.

(21)

But I shall cease and set my Name
to what I here insert,
Because to be a Libeller,
I hate it with my Heart.
From **Sherbon* Town, where now I dwell,
my Name I do put here,
Without Offence your real Friend,
it is PETER FOLGER. *April 23, 1676.*

**Nantucket.*

A P P E N D I X.

At the Court at St. *JAMES's*, the 2d Day of *June*, 1724.

P R E S E N T.

The KING's most Excellent Majesty.

His Royal Highness the	Duke of Newcastle.
Prince of Wales.	Earl of Westmorland.
A. B. of Canterbury.	Lord Visc. Townshend.
Lord Chancellor.	Lord Visc. Torrington.
Lord President.	Mr. Speaker of the House
Lord Privy Seal.	of Commons.
Lord Chamberlain.	Mr. Vice Chamberlain.
Duke of Roxburg.	William Pultney, Esq;

UPON reading this Day at the Board, a Report from the Right Honourable the Lords of the Committee of Councils, upon the Petition of *Thomas Richardson* and *Richard Partridge*, on behalf of *Joseph Anthony*, *John Sisson*, *John Akin*, and *Phillip Taber*, Prisoners in the common Goal at *New Bristol*, in his Majesty's Province of the *Massachusetts-Bay* in *New England*, for not assessing the Inhabitants of the Towns of *Dartmouth* and *Tiverton*, the additional Taxes of one Hundred Pounds, and Seventy two Pounds eleven Shillings, imposed upon them by an Act passed there in the Year 1722, which appears to be for the Maintenance of Presbyterian Ministers, who are not of their persuasion; and also in behalf of their Friends called Quakers in general, who are frequently under great Sufferings for Conscience sake

ⁱn that Government: By which Report it appears, that their Lordships are of Opinion, that it may be advisable for his Majesty to remit the said additional Taxes, so imposed on the said two Towns, and to discharge the said Persons from Goal.

His Majesty in Council taking the said Report into Consideration, is graciously pleased to approve thereof, and hereby to remit the said additional Taxes of one Hundred Pounds, and Seventy two Pounds eleven Shillings, which were by said Act to be assessed on the said Towns of *Dartmouth & Tiverton*. And his Majesty is hereby further pleased to order, that the said *Joseph Anthony, John Sisson, John Akin, & Phillip Taber*, be immediately released from their Imprisonment on account thereof. And the Governour, Lieutenant Governour, and Commander in Chief for the time being, of his Majesty's said Province of the *Massachusetts-Bay*, and all others whom it may concern, are to take Notice, and yield due Obedience hereunto

Temple Stanyan.

To the KING's most Excellent Majesty,

May it please your Majesty,

IN Obedience to an Order in Council from the late Lords Justices, during your Majesty's Absence abroad, bearing date the 24th day of *October* last, we did make a Representation upon an Act pass'd in the Province of the *Massachusetts-Bay* in *New-England* in 1722, entitled, *An Act for apportioning and assessing a Tax of Six Thousand two Hundred thirty two Pounds thirteen Shillings & eleven Pence*. Since which Time another Act mention'd in the

said Order of Reference passed the 29th day of May, 1723, entituled, *An Act for apportioning and assessing a Tax of Six Thousand two Hundred and five Pounds fifteen Shillings & eleven Pence Half Penny*, is come to our hands; by which Act a Tax is laid in exprefs Terms upon the Inhabitants of *Dartmouth* and *Tiverton*, for the Support of a Presbyterian, whom they call an Orthodox Minister, which falls almost entirely upon the Quakers; there being very few Inhabitants of any other Perswasion in these two Towns. But as by the Charter granted to this Province, a free and absolute Liberty of Conscience to all Christians (except Papists) was intended to have been their Foundation and Support; and as by several Laws passed there, it seems to have been laid down as a just and equitable Rule, that the Majority of each Town-Congregation should have the choice of their own Teachers, we cannot see why the Quakers should be refused this Liberty in the Towns where they are so great a Majority, and be obliged to maintain a Teacher of different Perswasion. Wherefore we humbly propose to your Majesty, that this Act may be repealed.

Which is most humbly submitted,

Whitehall, May 6, 1724.

A true Copy,

Test. *R. Partridge*.

Westmorland.

T. Pelham.

M. Bladen.

Edw. Athe.

F I N I S.



